



**Still Life with Apples
and Pitcher, 1872**
Camille Pissarro
(French, 1830–1903)
Purchase, Mr. and Mrs.
Richard J. Bernhard
Gift, by exchange, 1983
(1983.166)

Still Life

Learning Target

- Students will be able to develop and revise plans for his or her own artwork and select the best option (thumbnail sketches)
- Students will be able to solve complex compositional problems in his or her own artwork
- Students will be able to demonstrate purposeful use of a range of materials, tools, and techniques in his or her own artwork

How will we achieve this target?

- PowerPoint: Still Life (take notes)
- Create thumbnail sketches in sketchbook to develop ideas for composition
- Render a still life with the materials given
- Complete an artist statement
- Participate in class critique

Still Life

- Many classical artists (before the advent of photography) who were concerned with realism studied still-lives because they didn't move like models or the changing light of landscapes.



Still Life

- A still life is a group of **inanimate** objects.
- These are objects that are chosen for a specific reason and arranged in a certain way.
- Examples of objects that could be included in a still life are:
 - Bowl of fruit
 - Vase of Flowers
 - Bottles, cups, plates, dishes
 - Books
 - Plants
 - Chair or furniture



Still Life with Jar, Cup, and Apples, ca. 1877
Paul Cézanne (French, 1839–1906)
H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929
(29.100.66)

Still Life

- Most of the time, still lifes were organized for their varieties in materials – using contrast and variety in forms and textures – yet keeping unity in the composition from the artists' choice of color or value used.



Composition

- **Composition** is the arrangement or placement of objects. The composition is not just how the objects of a still life are put together but how you put them on your paper.
- How do you use the space on your paper? **Negative Space**, the blank or empty space, is just as important as the space that is drawn.



Flowers by a Stone Vase, 1786
Peter Faes (Flemish, 1750–1814)
Bequest of Catherine D. Wentworth, 1948
(48.187.737)

Steps to a Good Composition

- Step 1: Use a view finder or your hands to help you focus on the images you want to include in your drawing.
- This helps to block out the surrounding area and really focus on the items you are looking at.





You can hold it close to your face, at an “arms-length” or anywhere in between.

Move it left, right, up and down until you find an interesting composition.

*Use this to get started only...don't hold the viewfinder throughout the entire drawing process.

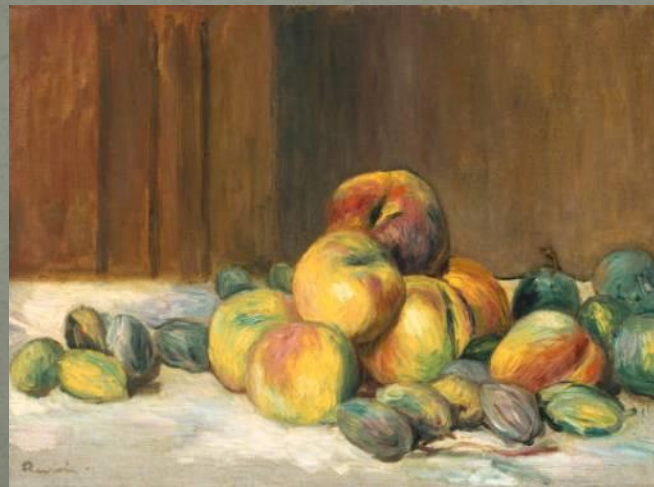
Steps to a Good Composition

- **Step 2: Decide if you want a closed composition or an open composition.**
- **Closed compositions** have all elements completely contained in your composition.
- **Open compositions** have items extending outside the visual panel.
- Both of these can make good compositions it just depends on the look you are going for. So try them both out.



Example of Closed Composition

Still Life with Peaches, 1881
Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919)
Bequest of Stephen C. Clark, 1960 (61.101.12)

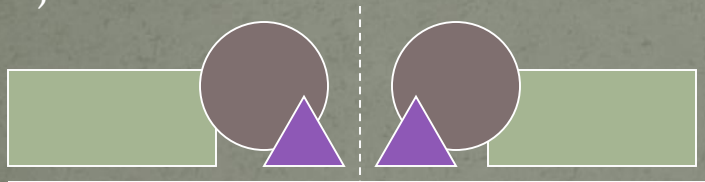


Example of Open Composition

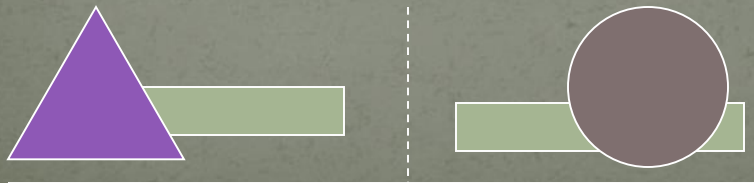
Pierre Auguste Renoir, Peaches and Almonds, 1901, oil on canvas, 31.1 x 41.3 cm, Tate Gallery, London.

Steps to a Good Composition

- **Step 3: Balance your composition.**
- **Symmetrical balance** is when the composition is even on both sides. If you folded it in half both sides would be equal. Symmetrical balance is more difficult because it must be precise or the eye will reject it.



- **Asymmetrical balance** is when one side dominates but balance is still achieved. Asymmetrical balance can be easier to arrange but still requires that you balance the elements of your still life with the negative space of the surrounding area.



Example of Symmetrical Balance

Still Life with Peaches, 1881
Auguste Renoir (French, 1841–1919)
Bequest of Stephen C. Clark, 1960 (61.101.12)



Example of Asymmetrical Balance

Henri [Ignace-Henri-Jean-Théodore] Fantin-Latour (French, 1836–1904), A Plate of Apples, 1861, oil on canvas, 21.0 x 26.4 cm, Tate Gallery, London. See Batignolles Group.

Composition

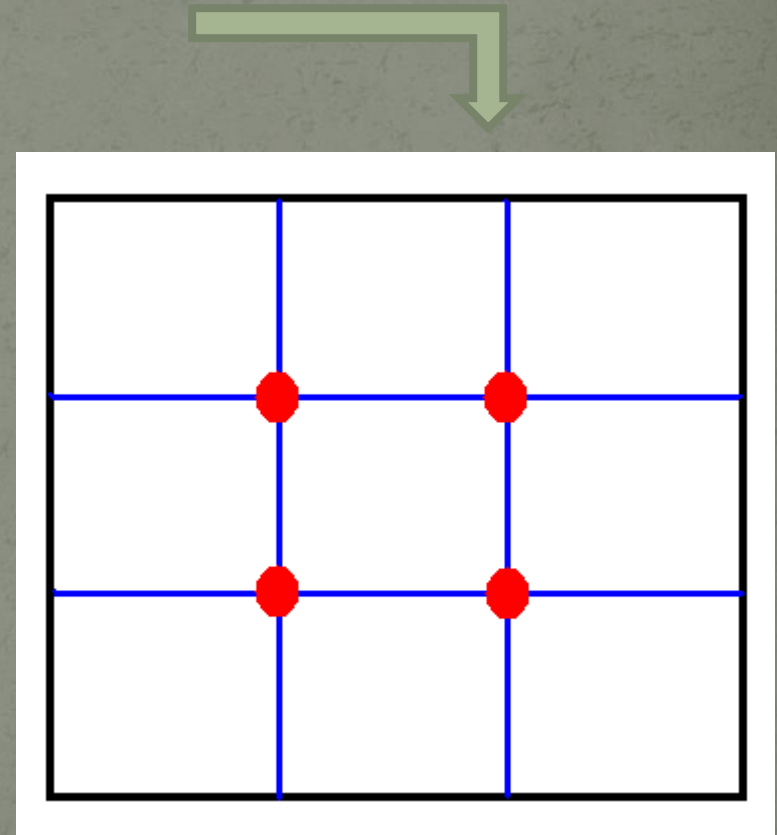
- Rules for good composition
 1. More on bottom than top
 2. Objects are not separated they overlap, touch and interrelate
 3. Don't start at the bottom. Use the whole paper and figure out what is going to be the best placement of objects.



Édouard Manet (French, 1832-1883),
Peonies, 1864-65, oil on canvas, 23 3/8 x
13 7/8 inches (59.4 x 35.2 cm),
Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY.

Composition

- Rule of Thirds
 - The composition is divided into thirds both vertically and horizontally)
- By placing your subjects on one of the red spots, you will create more visual interest and force the viewers eyes to move around the composition.



Notice how this artist uses the rule of thirds:





Perspective and Space

Perspective and Space play an important part in drawing a still life.

Perspective

- If an object is above the horizon line or eye level then the object angles downward.
- If an object is below the horizon line or eye level then it angles upward.

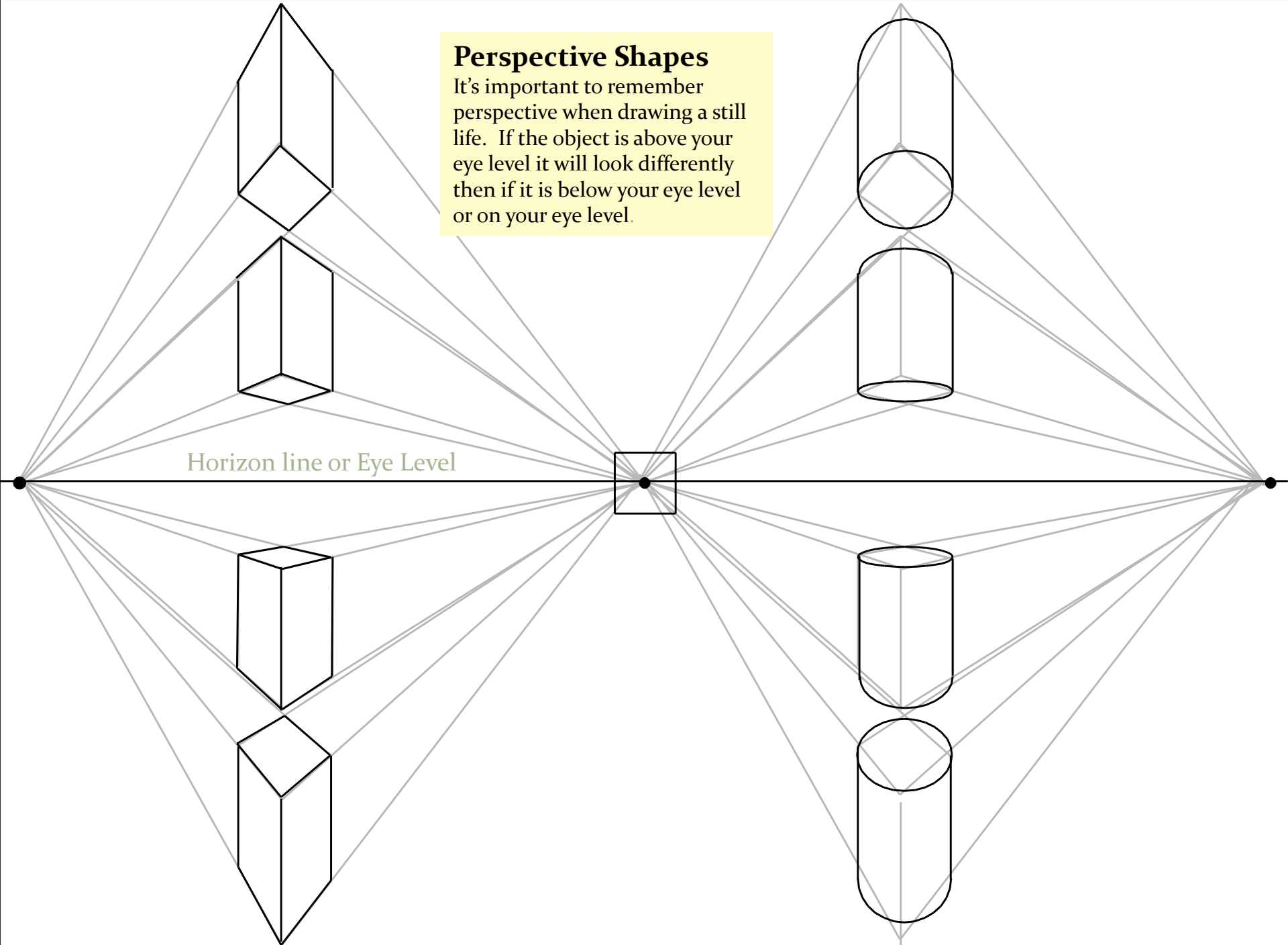


Space

- Objects that are closer to you are lower on the paper.
- Objects that are farther away are higher on the paper.
- You can show space better by overlapping objects.

Perspective Shapes

It's important to remember perspective when drawing a still life. If the object is above your eye level it will look differently then if it is below your eye level or on your eye level.





Many artists try to incorporate a

-*“foreground”*,

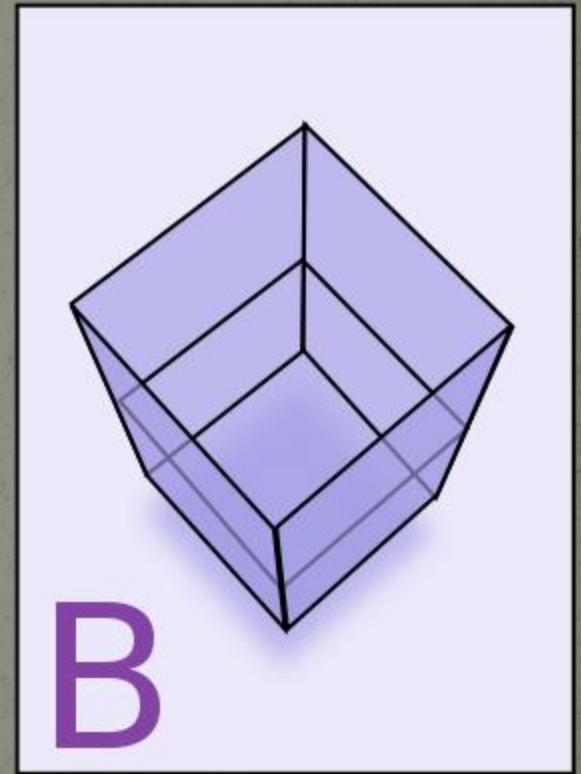
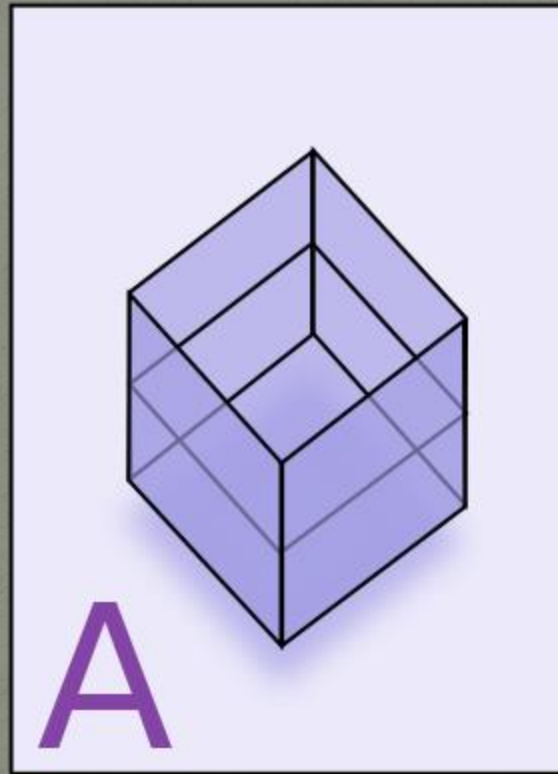
-*middle ground*
and

-*“background”*.

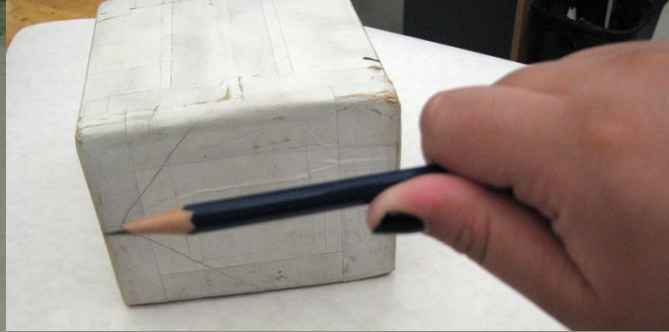
*This creates
“space” within
the scene.

Foreshortening

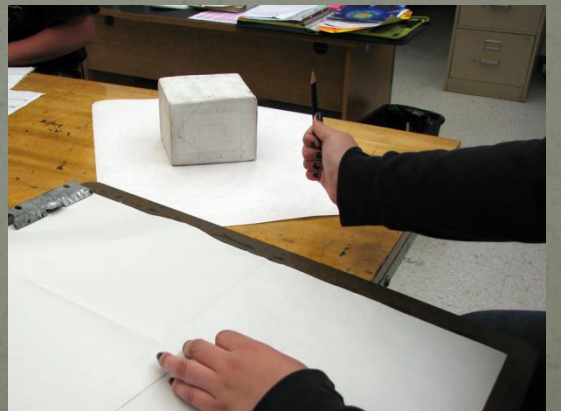
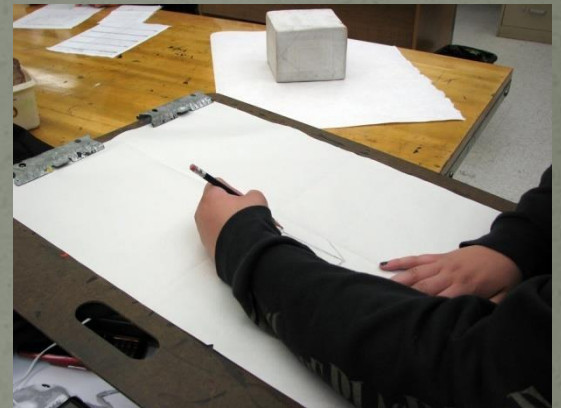
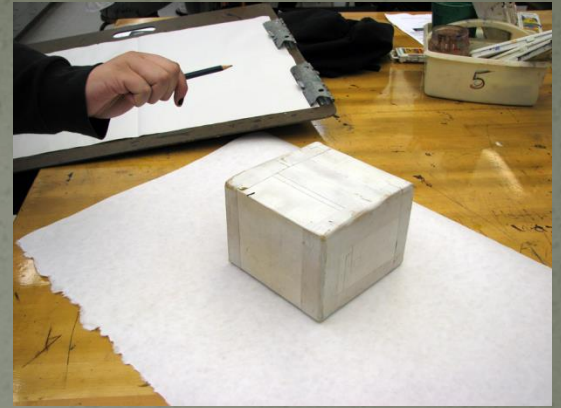
- **Foreshortening** is a technique for creating the appearance that the object you are drawing is extending into space. This is done by shortening the lines with which that object is drawn.



Sight

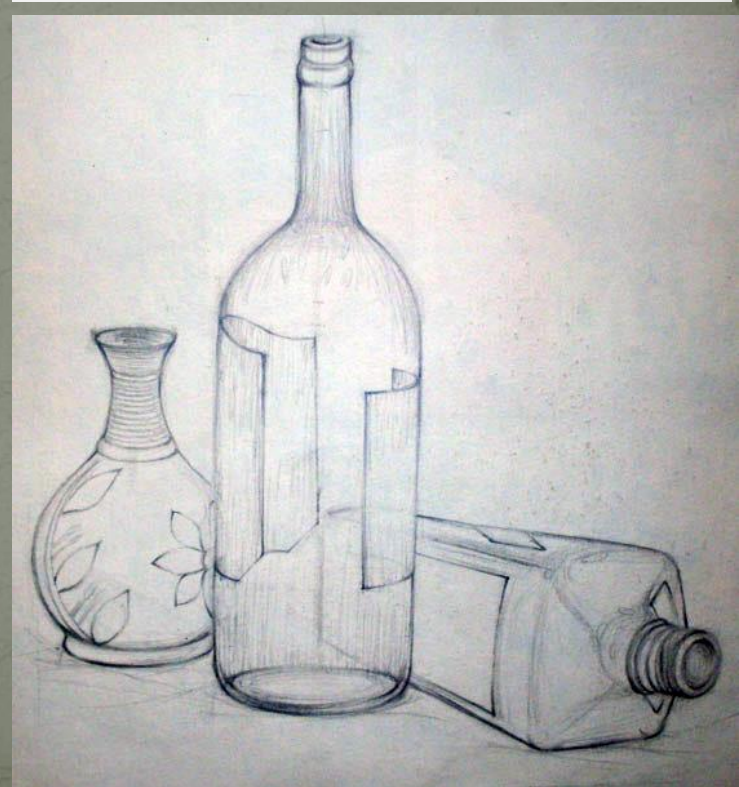


- To **Sight** means to measure. It is often referred to as sighting. This is another tool that artists use to get accurate drawings.
- To draw well, students need to learn to see size relationships, angle relationships, and the relationship of different negative space sizes. We can teach this using sighting devices and techniques. Students learn to measure and compare lengths, proportions, angles, and so on by sighting by holding a pencil at arms length while making comparison observations. These measurements are transferred to the paper.



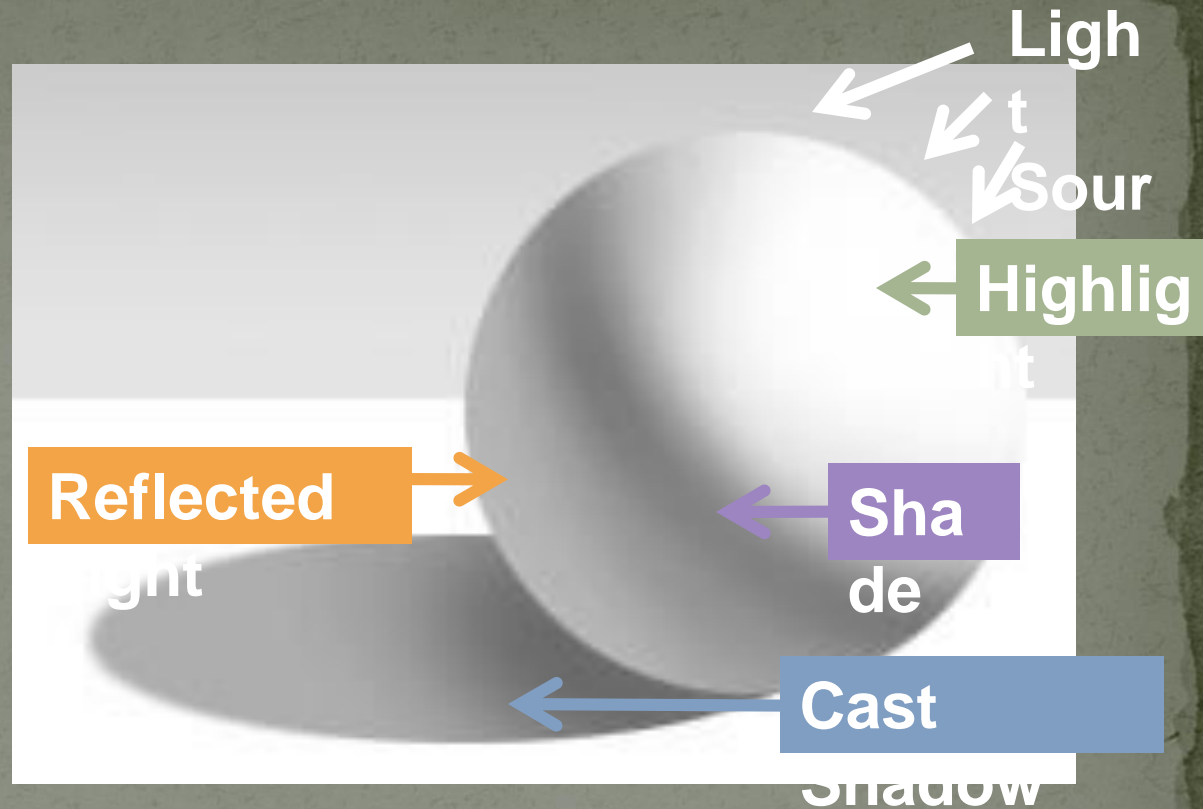
Visual Hierarchy

- Visual hierarchy refers to the arrangement or presentation of elements in a way that implies importance.
- In other words, visual hierarchy influences the order in which the human eye perceives what it sees.
- This order is created by the visual contrast between forms in a composition.
 - How can the artist create contrast?
- Objects with highest contrast to their surroundings are recognized first by the human mind.



Shading

- One key to making objects look realistic is creating shading. There are several key things you need to know about shading:



Light Source is where the light is coming from.

Highlights show how light hits an object.

Shade is the place where the light can not hit.

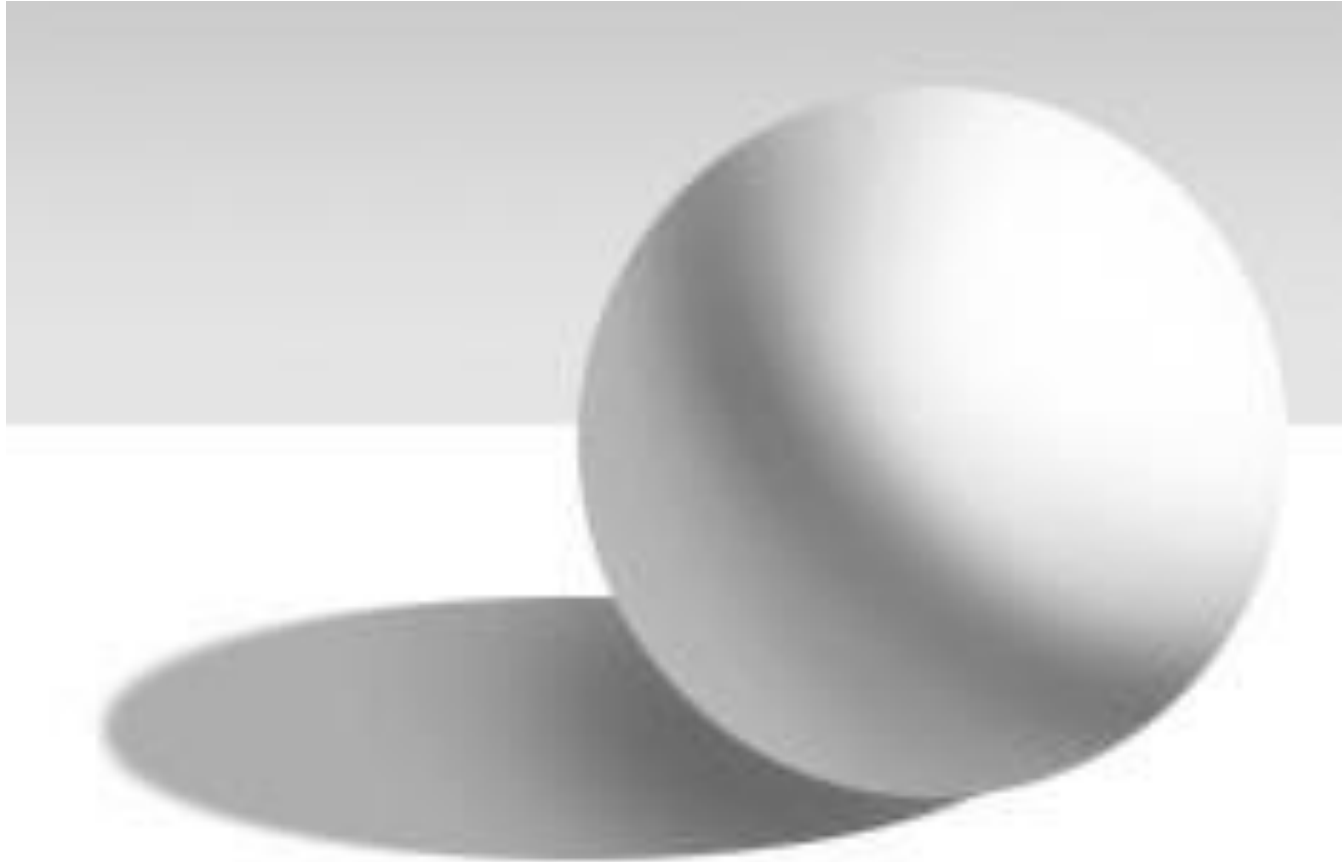
Reflected Light is the light that bounces off things, like the ground.

Cast Shadow is a shadow thrown by an object onto an adjacent surface.

Shading Exercise: Recreate the shading on the sphere

below.

After you are done label the highlight, shadow, cast shadow and reflected light.



Project

- Create a still life using the materials given to you.
- Attach the materials to the board.
- Make sure it is interesting for all angles.
- Keep in mind the tips for a good composition: space, hierarchy, shading/lighting, sight, and balance.
- Draw a minimum of 4 thumbnail sketches in your sketchbook
- Render your still life with pencil using the whole value scale.
- Write artist statement
- Participate in class critique

Examples

